

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF

A. C. HOSMER, Publisher.

RED CLOUD - NEBRASKA

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Given From Sea to Sea;
Or, JUST A CAMPIN'.

BY C. C. POST.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. E. DOWNEY
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CHAPTER XXV.—CONTINUED.

She could still see a little distance through the deepening gloom, and she observed that the water had cut bits of algeas between the potato rows, and the stubble field below had the appearance of having become a lake. The sun, too, instead of decreasing as the light set in, was, if possible, falling faster than ever, and she could hear a faint roar coming up from the ravine, and knew that soon the water would be rushing through it in great volume, and with a force that would overwhelm anything that might be caught in its path; and half dozen such ravines crossed the land over which her husband must pass coming from Phillipsburg.

She shuddered as she listened, and running away, went and sat down by Johnny's crib, and tried to interest him by reading a little story from a child's paper. But the boy was too sick to care for hearing her read; he wanted his father, and kept asking when he would come to which she could only reply that they might look for him again now, but that the rain might make him late, and they must be patient.

And so the hours wore on and the rain continued to fall, while every moment the weight at her heart grew heavier and more oppressive. Johnny slept fitfully, waking every few moments and always asking "if father had not come yet," or if his mother thought father would come home pretty soon now; until the sudden clasp of thunder came, at which he was seized with an awful fright and screamed again and again with all the force of weak lungs. Even his mother was startled into an involuntary exclamation by the suddenness of the commotion, and for an instant she thought the cottage had been caught in a land slide. She controlled herself at the sound of the child's cry, and bending down, lifted him tenderly in her arms, endearing his poor wasted form to her heart as if he had been but a babe. It was only with difficulty that she checked his screams, and even then he was so full and nervous, and sobbed and begged so piteously for his father, that it was only by calling to her all the tactitude which she possessed, that Martha Parsons was herself enabled to keep from breaking down.

It was an hour before Johnny was sufficiently calm to be again laid in his crib. As soon as she could leave him for a moment, she went to the window and tried to peer out into the darkness. She had placed one of the lamps in the window some hours before, hoping that it might prove a beacon to guide her husband if he was still living, which she was a most ready to do, so utterly desolate all things seemed.

Pressing her face close to the glass, she endeavored to penetrate the awful gloom—but could only see for a few feet into the darkness. The rays of light from the lamps had power to penetrate no farther. It seemed to her, as she stood there, straining her eyes in a vain effort to see, that the darkness was a living thing, and that it devoured the rays of light bodily, or congealed with them and slew them as they strove to drop into a horrible abyss, she in turn to feel the terrors. As she did so, a form covered with mud, fatness, and with a look of awe and half of surprise, as if he had seen the flight of the spirit and understood why and whether it had gone. And when all was done and the cub in which he lay had been wheeled into the kitchen, where the fire burning in the stove, gave a little more cheerful look to the room, he still asked no questions and made no complaint.

His mother found herself wondering if Johnny knew that his father was dead, but could think of no way of ascertaining without herself impairing the information if he did not already possess it, and this she feared to do lest it should cause his spirit to follow that of his father.

"It only we could both go," were the words that kept swelling up in her heart, and seeking utterance at her lips. Then remembering what Lucy had written, that if possible her mother should come to them before her babe was born, that she might be with her in her hour of trial, she felt anew that she must live for the sake of her children. But what was she to do? How could she obtain help to bury the dead, or a physician for the sick child? The rain might continue for a week, and already communication was cut off with all who lived below, if not with those on the other side of the mountain, and she dare not leave Johnny to go for help, even if she could make her way through the floods. She did leave him for a few moments, long enough to go to the stable and throw feed to the animal. She did not milk the cows, and did not dare leave the child long enough for that, but the horses she must feed, for she might need one to ride for help, and he must be strong to contend with the torrents which would have to be crossed if she did go.

About noon she made a cup of tea for herself and tried to eat, but found it almost impossible to do so, although she had eaten nothing for twenty four hours, and it was only by telling herself that she must eat in order to keep her strength until help came that she was enabled to swallow anything.

She did not think how long it might be before he came, but, come it ate or not, she must keep up until that time. She tried to think of some way of showing a sign of distress, as she had read of shipwrecked mariners doing at sea, but could not. She watched the one place in the road which could be seen from the kitchen window, but she saw no one pass. No one could pass the gorge, now a roaring, noisy torrent, with a depth and power that made fording it a matter of impossibility. And so the minutes and the hours dragged slowly by.

Night closed in early, owing to the darkened heavens, and she lit the lamps, placing one in the room with the dead, the other on a stand near the cot of the living, and sat by the side of her child to watch him die. That he would die before the morning she knew, and she wondered at her ability to act coolly, or to act at all.

All the night long part of the night she sat watching every movement of the hands, every rise and fall of the chest, every trembling of the eyelids, utterly unconscious of any weariness in her own frame. She kept a fire burning in the stove, and every little while gave the dying child a few drops of some fluid preparation which she had made, as the only thing she could do.

The child slept almost continually now, and when he awoke, made no effort to speak, but the questioning look which had not left him since his father's death had not left his eyes. At midnight approached she saw increasing evidences of approaching death, and knelt by the side of the cot with an arm under the pillow upon which her child's head lay. His breathing was less regular now, and weaker, coming in little quivering sighs and asthmatic sobs. He was aware, and said for some moments. At last his eyes were open and he seemed to be looking at her, but when she asked him if there was anything more he could do for her, he kept quiet, he had done so through his eyes were big with tears, and with the fever, which had come up higher than ever.

She finally succeeded in undressing him and getting him into bed, where he lay staring at her as she moved about, preparing his hot drinkings and placing them upon his head and feet, and across his chest.

Johnny had awakened when his father came, and tried to call him, but being told by his mother that his father had fallen from his horse and was hurt, and that he must keep quiet, he had done so through his eyes were big with tears, and with the fever, which had come up higher than ever.

The weary, drenched and mud-splattered horse lifted his head and gave a low whinny, but no answer came to her call.

"John! O-ooh John!"

The weary, drenched and mud-splattered horse lifted his head and gave a low whinny, but no answer came to her call.

She listened; but only the swish of the rain, falling in lateral sheets, and the dull roar of the swollen waters in the ravine below, reached her ears. And now she noticed that the horse's bridle-rein was dragging. Had he thrown his master, or had John dismounted in order to better keep the road, and by some means permitted the animal to escape him?

She examined the bridle-rein and found it broken, and she felt certain that the horse had thrown her husband,

and afterwards stepped upon the rein and broke it.

Then John was dead. The father of her crippled boy, her companion for so many years, was drowned, it might be in the angry stream which now were pouring through the gorge with the roar of a demon. Or he was lying in the road, cold and still, with his eyes staring up into the blackened heavens, the pitiless rain beating upon his face.

Such were the thoughts that burned their way through the brain of Martha Parsons as she stood dumbly looking at the broken rein by the dim light of the lantern. The impatient pawing of the horse, demanding to be led under shelter, recalled her to a knowledge of her surroundings, and quite mechanically she opened the stable door. The horse entered, rubbed his nose against that of his fellow and began at once to eat from the bin in front of him. Mrs. Parsons followed him in, removed the saddle and bridle, and taking the lantern from the floor where she had set it, retraced her steps through the storm to the house.

"I can't—no—use—Marty. My—my—hand—is—broken—out—and our—our claims have been jumped out."

He struggled for breath, his eye-balls turned up, and he choked, but seemed to rally his expiring energies for a final message, and addled:

"I'm going—over—the range—to—shake out—a new claim, and then—I'll find you when you come."

A great shiver shook his frame. His breast was covered with a long-drawn sign, and the spirit of John Parsons had gone ahead to prospect for a home for his loved ones in the other country, of which we know so little and hope so much.

CHAPTER XXVI. ANOTHER FAREWELL.

Daylight came at last; came slowly, as if it were forced to contend with the unwilling darkness for mastery; and even then the clouds did not lift, or the rain cease its steady down-pour.

Martha Parsons never knew whence came the strength that enabled her to close the eyes of her dead husband, or to continue existence when she had done so. One was dead, but one yet lived, and living, needed her care. While that life continued she felt that her strength would continue also, and beyond that she neither thought nor cared. When his father's spirit took its flight, and afterwards, while she was caring for the dead body—straightening out the limbs and folding the arms across the breast, Jo lay in his cot and watched his mother without a word or a cry, but with a look full of awe and half of surprise, as if he had seen the spirit which planned for the world about the return of the horse without his rider.

When she thought Johnny asleep, she arose and went into the kitchen. She did not dare to remain in the room with the eyes of her dead husband, and if that were so little chance of any good coming of it, was not to be afraid of it? She could do for her husband, living or dead, except to keep the lamp burning in the window as a beacon, in case, as was just possible, he had been thrown after crossing the gorge, and was now wandering about in the darkness.

But for Johnny she would have set out to follow the road back towards town, hoping to find some trace of her husband, but to do so and save Johnny when there was so little chance of any good coming of it, was not to be afraid of it? She could do for her husband, living or dead, except to keep the lamp burning in the window as a beacon, in case, as was just possible, he had been thrown after crossing the gorge, and was now wandering about in the darkness.

For many moments she sat motionless, and then stole out to the side of her child, whom she found much as he had been for some hours past, sleeping uneasily and with considerable fever. As she was slipping from the sick room again, she heard a noise at the kitchen door, a man entering the room, and when she did not hear him again, she heard a noise as if some one were fumbling at the kitchen door in a vain endeavor to find the latch. She listened with a feeling of returning hope mingled with a terrible, superstitious dread, the latter born of her excited condition and the terrible dreariness of her surroundings. The sound continued until it could not be mistaken; it was some one trying to open the door, and who else could it be but her husband? With a feeling of faintness, as if she had suddenly been caught as she was about to drop into a horrible abyss, she at once to the latch. As she did so, a form covered with mud, fatness, and with a look of awe and half of surprise, as if he had seen the spirit which planned for the world about the return of the horse without his rider.

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SHERMAN'S TRIBUTE.

A Criticism, Review and Eulogy on the Life and Deeds of General Grant.

At the recent meeting at Chicago, of the Army of the Tennessee General William Tecumseh Sherman delivered the following speech amid repeated cheers and other manifestations of applause:

COMRADES OF THE ARMY OF THE TENNESSEE:

Again are we assembled in this good city of Chicago, to pay our respects to the memory of General Grant.

At our last annual reunion, in 1864, at Louisville, Kentucky, we buried our dear General Grant, and paid him the last tribute of our sorrowful countrymen to the world.

This year, in 1865, we gathered together again to pay our respects to the memory of General Grant.

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